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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 002242

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SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG ON NORMAL COUNTRY
RESOLUTION, U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS, AND UN ISSUES

Classified By: AIT Director Stephen M. Young, Reason 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary: Foreign Minister James Huang told the Director on September 28 that he hopes the U.S. has taken note of President Chen's efforts to "tone down" the radical rhetoric of the DPP's "Normal Country" resolution. The Director responded that the "toned-down" version is also not helpful since it still touches on sensitive sovereignty issues. Huang argued that the modified resolution is in substance "no different" from the DPP's 1999 resolution on Taiwan,s future. The Director stressed that U.S.-Taiwan relations have been damaged by President Chen,s pushing of various initiatives such as the UN referendum that unnecessarily raise tensions across the Strait. As a friend of the U.S., Taiwan needs to take a more responsible view of the potential impact that actions or statements by its leaders can have on the security situation in the Western Pacific. Huang and the Director also discussed recent UNGA proceedings and the Foreign Minister's recent trip to the Caribbean. End Summary.

Normal Country Resolution "Toned-Down"

12. (C) Foreign Minister James Huang told the Director on September 28 that he hopes the U.S. has taken notice of how hard President Chen has worked to "tone down" the radical rhetoric of the "normal country" resolution (NCR) originally proposed by DPP Chairman Yu Shyi-kun. The Director responded that the U.S. does not see either version as helpful, emphasizing that in U.S. eyes this change was from "worse to bad" since the "toned-down" version still touched on areas of deep concern to the U.S. Huang argued that the modified resolution is in substance "no different" from the DPP's 1999 resolution on Taiwan,s future and does not cross any red lines. He acknowledged that Frank Hsieh was not happy with either version since they created a lot of stress within the party. President Chen had spent much time trying to rein in the resolution, was taking a lot of political heat from the deep-Greens, and was not happy with Yu pushing the issue

because it created unnecessary disagreements within the party. Huang urged the Washington and Beijing not to "overreact" to the resolution, saying President Chen is working hard to "control the situation" and that the modified resolution was "not that bad." (Note: The DPP Party Congress subsequently voted down the Yu-backed NCR and unanimously passed the "compromise" version supported by Chen and Hsieh (septel). End Note.)

Getting Past the UN Referendum?

13. (C) Huang told the Director that the UN referendum would be difficult to similarly "roll back." Huang noted that Chen had also not endorsed more strident calls to push entry under the name "Republic of Taiwan" vice "Taiwan." President Chen and Frank Hsieh "see eye to eye" on the UN referendum issue. Hsieh proposed and strongly supported the idea of using the name "Taiwan" to enter the UN as early as the 1990s when he debated then (KMT) Foreign Minister Chiang Hsiao-yen. Apart from the UN question, Huang suggested other issues raised in this year's election should not be as "provocative." He urged the U.S. to closely read and put more weight on Frank Hsieh's forthcoming foreign policy white paper, which will be a better predictor of his future policy objectives as president than any campaign-related rhetoric.

14. (C) Nevertheless, Huang urged the U.S. and Taiwan not to wait until the inauguration of Taiwan's new president next May to begin "repairing" the damaged U.S.-Taiwan relationship. When pressed by the Director on what concrete steps the two sides could take to address current concerns, however, Huang provided no specifics and only suggested

TAIPEI 00002242 002 OF 002

"something constructive." Huang compared U.S.-Taiwan relations to a marriage that, despite its strength, can run into rocky patches. Huang suggested that when Chen Shui-bian was elected president in 2000 Washington, Beijing, the KMT, and even the DPP were not used to the phenomenon of a new ruling party on Taiwan. A DPP government that believes in strengthening Taiwan identity and giving the public the right to determine Taiwan's future via public referenda naturally introduces more "variables" into the U.S.-Taiwan relationship. Huang urged the U.S. to be more accommodating and patient when dealing with issues that reflect the views of a majority of people on Taiwan.

15. (C) The Director told Huang that U.S.-Taiwan relations have been damaged by President Chen's pushing of various initiatives over the past few years, most recently the UN referendum, that unnecessarily raise tensions across the strait and could lead to a potentially destabilizing situation. By his actions and statements President Chen has put an ever greater burden on the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, the Director emphasized. As a friend of the U.S., Taiwan needs to take a more responsible view of the potential impact that actions or statements by its leaders can have on the security situation in the Western Pacific.

UNGA Discussion a "Surprise"

16. (C) Turning to Taiwan's recent bid to enter the UN, FM Huang claimed that Taiwan was "surprised" by the UNGA chairperson's decision to open the floor to debate Taiwan's membership on September 21. Huang said Taiwan had no advance warning that the issue would be opened up. TECRO New York and Washington offices had to scramble to make sure Taiwan allies spoke up in its defense. Huang suggested that perhaps China had given the chairperson the green light to hold the debate out of a desire to embarrass Taiwan in the UN.

17. (C) Huang said that Taiwan was not surprised by the decision of some allies, notably Panama and Nicaragua, to remain silent during the UNGA proceedings. Huang explained

that Panama has over the past few years consistently told Taipei that it would maintain diplomatic ties with the ROC but would not support Taiwan's attempts to join international organizations, preferring to remain "neutral" on the issue. Nicaragua President Ortega told President Chen in September of this year that Managua would also not support Taiwan's UN bid because Nicaragua is seeking a seat on the UNSC in 2008 and did not want to alienate China. Ortega also said that he would decide whether or not to support a Taiwan bid next year based on the outcome of Taiwan's UN referendum.

Recent Trip to Caribbean

18. (C) Overall, FM Huang said he was confident that Taiwan was doing all it could to maintain relations with its allies. China, he noted, has been working hard to undermine those relations in an increasingly "serious" game both sides are playing. Huang was upbeat about his recent trip to the Caribbean, saying that the new Prime Minister of St. Lucia is a close Taiwan "friend," having visited Taiwan three times in the past and attended a month-long special training course arranged by the Taiwan government in 2005. Huang said he managed to make contact with several Caribbean leaders of countries with no formal relations with Taiwan who attended the funeral of former Prime Minister Compton.

YOUNG